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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: PA JUSTICE SECTOR EFFORTS PROGRESSING IN
INFRASTRUCTURE, STAFFING

REF: GMP20080923745003

¶1. (SBU) Summary. Since the May 29 signing of its Justice Sector Strategy (JSS), the PA has progressed in implementing several areas of the plan: infrastructure, staffing, and case backlog reduction. PM Fayyad highlighted this progress in recent press statements (ref A). End Summary.

Infrastructure -----

¶2. (SBU) Chief Justice Issa Abu Sharar told PolSpec on September 25 that construction of the Jericho and Jenin courthouses has been completed this year, while expansion of the facility in Bethlehem is underway. The JSS calls for additional construction in Hebron, Tulkarem, Qalqiliya, and Ramallah. Courthouse construction is being undertaken by the Government of Canada. On prisons, Abu Sharar said construction had not yet taken place but that the plan calls for three central prisons located regionally in the north, south, and central areas of the West Bank.

Staffing -----

¶3. (SBU) In comments to Palestinian daily Al Ayyam September 23, PM Fayyad highlighted new funding for 70 additional judges and 100 additional court clerks in support of the JSS. Abu Sharar said that, over the course of the three-year plan, the JSS calls for 217 new judges, of which 46 have been appointed to date. The plan calls for an additional 782 clerks and support staff to be added by 2010; 177 are already on board.

Case Backlog -----

¶4. (SBU) Fayyad also noted an increase in the number of sentences implemented. The Attorney General's office had not compiled statistics to illustrate the increased implementation of sentences, but is working to produce that information. Chief Justice Abu Sharar told PolSpec that, as of late August, 60,434 cases were pending before the court and approximately 50,000 cases had been closed year-to-date.

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